

Pamph. Africa
Congo

Buxton

No. 93
CONTINUATION COMMITTEE
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AMONG THE AZANDI IN BELGIAN CONGO. 3.

POINTS FOR PRAYER.

1. That there may be a speedy Harvest among the Azandi.
2. That the favour with which the Missionaries have been received may continue.
3. That a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit may come upon the places lately visited by Mr. STUDD and Mr. BUXTON :—Tota, Rungu, Gumbari, Bafuka, Poko, La Gada, Dhoruma.
4. For the 15 Chiefs round Niangara, Okondo, Kolgoni, his son Abusa and M. Boma. For the Mengbettu and their Chiefs.
6. For the Azandi Women and a Band of Lady Missionaries to go to them.
7. For Doctors and a Hospital for the Azandi.

For further information :

THE HON. SEC., HEART OF AFRICA MISSION,
17, HIGHLAND ROAD,
NORWOOD.

NIANGARA,

December 30th, 1913.

"C.T." down with fever again. He went down on Boxing Day morning, with a temperature of 104.6.

Bread is invalid diet only and yesterday's loaf is the first for some time. The "Ideal" milk is nearly done. The last tin of biscuits too is open, and sugar and even saxon will soon be done, though for a long time we have been on short rations. But for all that it is easy enough to live off the country and we are practically doing so. The whole life is in fact very enjoyable and there are no real hardships for anyone my age. For "C.T." it is different, however, and it means a great deal to him. Last Monday "C.T." went out along the Poko Road on his bike but it was not nearly so suitable for a station as the Rungu Road. He went along this again the next day and looked at a good many sites and selected two or three. We have really decided to settle this side of Okondo by a good distance—probably an hour. We have gradually come to the conclusion, and may be we have been kept waiting for this — that if we are too close we should always have Okondo and his wives coming, not for us, but for our "tea" and to ask for things they want. This would probably make other people feel that we were there for Okondo's benefit alone. Moreover if he ever did become unfriendly it would be very awkward if

he were too close. Strangely enough the cook also was against being too near, and he spoke of it of his own accord a few days back, and spoke of some high ground which "C.T." too had seen, as being a good place.

"C.T." got back in the evening just as I was starting out to find him, and he had done a great deal. The people everywhere had been most pleasant and delighted with the idea of our building near there. "C.T.'s" exhibition bike tricks and giving a little girl a ride and photos of everybody evidently won their hearts, and they cooked for him, and showed him places where they would build a house if they were he.

Of course that day I couldn't go out, so next afternoon I went to shoot our Christmas dinner. As usual I went along the Dungu Road, but this time two hours further than usual, to the cook's village, from whose account I imagined the game was as thick as in the ark! It was after dark when we arrived, having picked up the chap who shoots guinea fowl for us on the way. I give him two cartridges and if he does badly he brings back two guinea fowl, if well, he brings four! Even with his wages 3s. 6d. per month, this is probably cheaper than chickens and far nicer and makes far larger meals. Lately however he has brought none as they are too wild.

On arrival food was soon going and my bedroom under some palm trees soon selected. I refused to sleep in a native hut but that was before they told me there were leopards, and a big one was round each night after chickens, and was bound to take Joe if he slept out, etc., etc. However I couldn't draw back then and I saw to it that Joe shouldn't—of course the open air is so much better for him. However, thanks to Joe, who wanted more than half my blanket, the mosquitoes and the imaginary leopards, I didn't sleep much till 12. I then brought a fire that was about five yards off quite close, and after a walk round for more wood slept quite well, waking up now and again to stoke the fire, which, as it entailed nearly rolling out of the blankets, meant that each time Joe annexed a few more inches of territory. For all that I was fed up when morning came and I had to turn out. Santa Claus, the wretch, had forgotten me, but I had little time to think of him and was soon out to get my own Christmas present. Our "gamekeeper" or perhaps better, "poacher" came with me. I had two stalks after oribi but was each time too late to shoot. Then suddenly we came on a huge animal. I didn't a bit know what it was and had visions of buffalo and rhino and admired the trees for a few seconds—sort of thing you are apt to do if thinking deeply while out shooting.—A few more seconds I had crawled to a better place and then like a fool shot when the beast's head was down and I could see little of him in the grass. Of course, I missed and off went a magnificent boar, but without seeing us. We followed running among the anthills, and I got two more shots, which should have meant a bag for anyone else, but in my case nothing. We never saw him again in spite of following his tracks for half-an-hour or more. We came across heaps of tracts—waterbuck, heartbeast, bushbuck, and others being there, but we saw nothing more till nearly 9 when I had about given up hope. Then suddenly "the poacher" said, there was "something coming," and down we went in the grass and soon two boars and two little ones came ambling along. The poacher pointed at one and I fired—no cartridge in the chamber alas! However, they waited a few seconds to see what we were and I got another shot in and bowled one over—shot through the shoulder dead. Worst luck it was only the female, I had mistaken the one, and so the teeth were small. I went on for another hour but saw nothing else. It was too hot by then and so after a short meal I biked home, taking about 1½ hours.

I found "C.T." not very well and most of the afternoon I read to him. In the evening the beast arrived and we were able to send a Christmas present to all our friends, which was worth a good deal. The skin is dried and might do for soleing boots. Orders should be sent at once owing to the great demand, enclosing a postal order for 10s. or 15s., post free. (Father's boots 6d. extra).

Later.—I have just been reading "General Gordon in Central Africa" to "C.T." When he sat down in his deck chair the thing wholly crumpled up, but fortunately he did not get his hand caught. Another merciful escape was a few nights ago, when a candle put on a box burnt the tent above it badly.

Our Christmas Day was very quiet after I got in as "C.T." was not very fit. We imagined you all with Church, presents, cakes and turkeys, crackers and general noise and universal kissing. What we chiefly envied was a good thick bit of bread and butter for

which we would have given anyone the whole of the pig. Boar head for Christmas is very fashionable however, I believe.

We had rain this morning for a wonder.

Saturday, January 3rd.

I have most splendid news! We found out a blacksmith among the natives and he has managed to mend my broken fork of the bike. It is splendid and I have used it alright so far, and I hope it will last. The difficulty of the ball bearings I got over by dividing them up from all over the machine and it ran very well. I have cut down my breeches to make shorts, but have not got to the delightful stage of being well burnt yet, with the joys of blisters, etc.

"C.T." has always felt that we ought to have a place "in town."

The days are very hot now and the nights warmer. We had a fine surprise mail from Bambili on Wednesday. I got a gorgeous pair of much needed boots from Mother, and an electric torch from the brothers, and "C.T." the stationery he was needing.

The best address for us is not "via Khartum," but "Via Cairo and Aba," as letters are put into special bags for the Congo at Cairo.

January 8th.

We went on to O.K.'s village (O.K. is no relation to the sauce, but only our pet name for Okondo, so that he doesn't know when he is being talked of). We had lunch in the rest house, or rather sitting on its steps with a crowd of admirers around, and one specially thoughtful individual, who insisted on performing the duty of picking crumbs out of "C.T.'s" beard. The greatest sensation was reached when "C.T." did the trick of giving a coin to a man in his open palm, with "C.T.'s" beside, and then at "three" jerking out the coin back into his own hand. This was followed by a chap saying biking was easy, he could do it at once, but two falls and a proper amount of laughter soon cured that.

We have decided to store our things and leave on Monday for the Southern trip. First to Tota (three days West), then to Poko (three days South-west of it), and then Nada (four days East) and so to Rungu (three days) and Okondo (two days). O.K. may hang on here sometime longer, and anyhow "C.T." wants to do this trip sometime, so I am awfully bucked. We shall travel very light and we ought to be back by the end of January. The mail got in on Monday and it brought heaps of good news—of Perkins, and things in general—the last letter dated November 24th.

These people have a strange system of celebrating their coming of age—they change their names. Their father gave them one, and then when they consider themselves grown up they invent a name and everyone starts calling them by it. I asked what would happen if some infant prodigy considered himself grown up a little too previously, venturing to suggest a little paternal chastisement might reduce his age and the size of his head simultaneously. Not so, however, for the father is really proud of his boy.

Even in the midst of this civilization, "old things have not passed away," they have only been cloaked. For a few days back a woman and two men found a man drowned, they took him to the shore, cut him up and brought him to the market for sale as "antelope." It would never have been discovered except that a soldier discovered a piece of skin on his purchase.

In the old days the chiefs did a good deal of cutting off hands, and we saw a man with both off yesterday. It was usually done to punish a man for taking another man's wife. If he killed the husband it was then no business of the chief and no punishment ensued. There were a great number of murders—all the natural result of polygamy among the chiefs.

The people are constantly asking what sort of cash will follow the "coin" money. In the old days, little bars of copper were used as money. They were supplanted by coin and the riddle is "what supplants coin, if coin supplants copper?"

Saturday, January 10th.

We have decided to take the trip the other way round. We are fortunate at Rungu in that Grunne's Secretary, a nice chap who talks English, has just got down there as Chef de Poste.

Africa (Congo)
Buxton, A. B.

We are now having "prayers" with the boys. I get along fairly well; though words are so few it is not easy, and what there are I don't know! The people say they know nothing of God, "only His name," but they have a kind of fatalism. Thus they will bathe in rivers where there are crocs., and if God wills it they will be eaten, if not they survive, and the same in the old wars.

Rungu, January 14th.

I write from one of the most lovely places I have ever seen, which we have reached after three very successful marches.

The boys carry one rifle and gun, cameras and cartridges. Our woodman has come with us so we have two boys and the cook.

We saw a large antheap on which one of Munza's sons was shot, when hiding from his pursuers after making war on Niangara. Munza was a Mangbetta and Niangara a Bangba. The former came from the South and conquered the latter. Niangara, however, made a league with an Arab trader and his troops and together they defeated and killed the great Munza. Niangara then ruled all the land between the Welle and Bomokandi and from Poko to Dungu. He died ten years back and had a great many children. About fifteen of these are big chiefs now in this territory. Okondo was his sixth son, and Kongoli his seventh. The third, Abusa, is a big chief near here, as also Kongoli.

It was desperately hot. Almost directly the country quite changed and began to be covered with most lovely trees, while the villages became frequent.

We were received most warmly by the Chef de Poste, Mr. P., an Austrian, and Mr. G., Grunne's late Secretary, but who is here to help Mr. P. They took us to this delightful house, not fifteen yards from the river. It is beautifully quiet and such a change after the tent.

Mr. P. has been here for eight months alone and in that time has made a splendid Poste—the prettiest we have seen—out of what was practically a marsh. His time too has been occupied in map-making, subduing the unruly chiefs, who are pretty numerous, and collecting many interesting things from the history of the Mangbettu (or Mombettu). When he came here many of his chickens and goats were taken by a "woman leopard." That is one that comes at night with iron claws on her fingers and some even wearing a leopard skin. The natives are terrified of them and the chief *used*, at any rate, to use them to get rid of disagreeable people. The "leopard" comes in the night and tears the throat of her victim. A judge determined to find out the truth about it and went to a village where one such person was, with a band of soldiers, who slept on his verandah, and his secretary (?) in the doorway. That night the secretary was killed. Mr. P. was not so unfortunate. He caught the woman, put her on his verandah to sleep, with the warning, that he would shoot her if she played leopard. He saw that night he slept with one eye open and his revolver under his pillow, but nothing happened and she never played leopard again.

Mr. P. told us a bit more of Niangara's history. On the death of Munza, Barre, his son, came up from the South to avenge his father. Niangara asked Ninzina, one of Munza's wives, what the omens said. She said "To-morrow at noon you will not be able to drink water, all will be blood." Niangara made an ambush and burnt all his village. Barre and his men found the latter and decided Niangara had fled and began a great dance, when Niangara and his men came on them and it is said so many were killed there *was* a river of blood. Barre was the brother of Sardy whom I mentioned before. Ninzina is now the wife of Okondo. She was in charge of the village when we passed through and she often drinks tea with us. She is very big and all say that Okondo is not the chief but his wife!

Mr. P. is sending an old soldier with us as guide to Nala, which is an evacuated Poste as is also Dura. Nala is a splendid place we hear and both would be splendid for stations for us. It is two days to Nala and then five to Poko.

Friday.

I went out shooting yesterday morning with Mr. G., just with the shot gun. The big antelope are no nearer than six hours.

We got back to find "C.T." poorly and soon what we feared happened—he had fever.

ALFRED BARCLAY BUXTON.